



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING IN BRITAIN

CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION REFERENCE PAMPHLET 9

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INTRODUCTION

THE AIM of town and country planning in Britain is to provide pleasant surroundings for people to live and work in. The land of Britain is one of the most densely populated areas in the world: it is, therefore, important to preserve a balance between the competing claims made on the land by homes, industry, transport and leisure. This objective is pursued through legislation under which building development and the use of land (largely a matter of private initiative) are regulated by locally elected public authorities. The authorities may impose restrictions, for example, to prevent unsightly building, to protect historic buildings and areas of particular visual appeal such as moorland or coast as well as open spaces in urban areas, and they also encourage positive development in the form of, for example, well designed, spacious housing lay-outs, parks and other amenities. Special forms of development formulated at a national level include the creation of new towns and the designation of national parks and nature reserves.

The need for co-ordination and central control over the use of land became generally recognised early in the present century. Before then it had been thought that free and untrammelled enterprise was necessary for national prosperity; any extension of government activity beyond what was considered its proper sphere would have been looked upon as an encroachment on personal liberty and likely to handicap initiative. The consequence of this belief was that houses, factories and other buildings were erected haphazardly wherever sites could be most cheaply and conveniently acquired, without considering whether their location might be socially desirable.

The absence of any policy for the development of the land during the nineteenth century, a period of great expansion, led, in the first place, to congestion in towns which possessed advantages for industrial enterprise—for example, those situated near coalfields or large ports—and, later, when the congested conditions became intolerable, to suburban sprawl. The position in the towns was exacerbated by the presence of large areas of housing which rapidly became unfit for habitation while suburban development (much of which took place on good farming land and over rich mineral deposits) was soon found to be sterilising some of the country's most valuable natural resources and, in addition, to be creating social and economic difficulties of its own.

This situation finally led to the realisation that some form of control over land use was essential. From 1909, when the first Act to refer to town planning by name was passed, until the present day, the basic purpose of town and country planning has been to ensure, as far as possible, that land is used in the best interests of the nation as a whole, rather than being simply subject to market forces. The Housing, Town and Country Planning Act 1909 was concerned primarily with public health and housing: it gave local authorities permissive power to adopt and administer planning schemes. The Acts of 1932 (one for England and Wales and one for Scotland) extended the scope of planning by allowing authorities to make planning schemes for almost any land, urban or rural, so that they could bring most of the land in their areas under control. For the first time, the Acts also contained provisions for

preserving buildings of special interest and for protecting trees and woodlands.

Meanwhile a housing boom was taking place; by 1939 one-third of all the houses in England and Wales had been built since 1918. The purposes of the planning legislation were hampered, however, partly because it was permissive legislation only, not compulsory, and partly because local authorities who wished to exercise planning control were deterred from doing so by inadequate compulsory powers and compensation liabilities. With the help of special studies of the major planning problems, carried out during the second world war, the Government introduced in 1947 two Town and Country Planning Acts (one for England and Wales and one for Scotland) which were radical and comprehensive and imposed compulsory planning duties on all local planning authorities.

The authorities' work involves a fairly detailed control over the location, size and character of towns and villages; over the siting of industry and development by gas and electricity boards, water suppliers and, in some cases, transport authorities; and over the working of minerals. It also involves the protection of agriculture and forestry and the preservation of the countryside and coast as a source of pleasure to the community no less than as a source of national wealth.

THE FRAMEWORK OF PLANNING

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The main government departments concerned with planning are:

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government, which is responsible for town and country planning in England and Wales as well as for housing and a range of local government services. The Minister has the duty of 'securing consistency and continuity in the framing and execution of a national policy with respect to the use and development of land throughout England and Wales'. Responsibility for carrying out the policy for Wales rests with the Secretary of State for Wales (see below).

The Town and Country Planning Act 1962 (which consolidated the 1947 Act and subsequent legislation) is the principal Act now governing land use in England and Wales. Under the Act local planning authorities are required to survey their areas and to prepare development plans for approval by the Minister (see p. 5). The Act controls development by making it subject to the permission of the local planning authority.

The Minister has additional responsibilities in connection with new towns and town development, national parks and the countryside.

The Ministry also undertakes research. It offers guidance on planning techniques, principles and standards to local authorities through memoranda, bulletins and circulars. Co-ordination with other government departments with complementary responsibilities was increased in 1963 by the formation, with the Ministry of Transport and the Scottish Development Department, of a Joint Urban Planning Group (now superseded by an Urban Planning Directorate (see p. 27)). With the growth in regional planning there is also increased co-ordination with the economic departments, particularly the Department of Economic Affairs.

The Welsh Office, which has executive responsibility for town and country planning including new towns, as well as housing, roads, water resources and local government in Wales. It is also responsible, in conjunction with the Department of Economic Affairs, for directing the development plan for Wales.

The Scottish Development Department, which has responsibilities similar to those of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for town and country planning, housing and local government services and, in addition, for roads, electricity, water supply and industrial development.

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1947 is the principal Act governing land use in Scotland.

The Ministry of Development for Northern Ireland, which is the department primarily responsible for town and country planning. It is also responsible for roads and transport, housing, local government and water resources.

Other government departments with important responsibilities relating to town and country planning are:

The Department of Economic Affairs, which has the task of achieving a full and balanced development of the country's economic and social resources. A group in the department is responsible for regional policies to integrate the planning of industry, employment, land use and transport.

The Board of Trade, which has a general responsibility for British industry, including control over its location and for control over office development. The board issues industrial development certificates and office development permits which are usually required before development may take place. It also designates certain parts of the country as 'development areas' (see p. 8).

The Ministry of Transport, which has powers and duties relating to inland transport (including roads, railways, canals and ports) in Britain. In recent years land use and transport planning have become increasingly integrated (see p. 26).

The Ministry of Public Building and Works, which is responsible for the maintenance of ancient monuments (usually uninhabited) (see p. 28), royal palaces and official residences and the management of royal parks.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the *Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland*, which are concerned with physical planning relating to agricultural land.

The Ministry of Power, which is concerned with the coal, gas and electricity industries and their installations in England and Wales.

ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In England and Wales local planning authorities are the councils of counties, county boroughs, the London authorities¹ and in some areas, joint planning boards—a total of some 175 authorities. District councils often act under delegated authority from the counties. In Scotland planning authorities are the councils of counties, of large burghs and of the two small burghs of St. Andrews and Thurso.

Under the Town and Country Planning Acts these authorities are required to survey their areas and prepare and submit development plans to the appropriate Minister for approval. The whole of the country is now covered by approved development plans. Some large authorities are able to establish separate planning departments to draw up the plan and supervise its implementation. Small authorities often exercise their planning functions through departments concerned with roads, engineering or architecture. Other local authorities, of which Liverpool and Plymouth are examples, have engaged private consultants to prepare advisory plans for a complete redevelopment of their cities.

The plans indicate the way in which the authorities propose that land should be used and the stages by which any development should be carried out. The authorities exercise development control in accordance with the plans and, subject to ministerial consent, they may acquire land compulsorily

¹The Greater London Council (GLC), 32 London boroughs and the City of London.

for their own housing and other schemes. Planning permission has to be obtained from the authorities for all (except relatively minor) new development, including any significant change in the use of an existing building or land. If permission is refused an appeal may be made to the appropriate Minister: a public inquiry may be held. Some 470,000 planning applications are dealt with each year of which some 83 per cent are granted. About a quarter of the refused applications are taken on appeal to the appropriate Minister. If development is carried out without permission the planning authority may serve an enforcement notice on the owner and occupier of the land requiring even the demolition of a building. It may prosecute if the notice is not complied with.

Development Plans

Each development plan consists of a written statement of policy summarising the main intentions of the authority, accompanied by a series of maps which indicate the developments projected over the next 20 years and the pattern of land use at the end of that period. In addition, a report of the survey conducted prior to the preparation of the plan is often made available. This shows the existing land use—for example, the extent of residential and industrial property, open spaces and communications.

Local planning authorities take into account all expected or possible developments that might affect their areas such as population changes within the immediate area, migration from region to region or overseas and for work or for retirement. They also consider national decisions, for example, to develop a motorway network, to rationalise the railway services or to establish a new university.

The new development plan for Greater London (covering 620 square miles—about 160,000 hectares), now being prepared by the GLC, will include a general policy statement on the population of the area and on the density of the proposed housing provision. It will deal with the problem of the volume of employment, indicating where the growth of offices and industry should be restricted or encouraged. A pattern of communications will be drawn up and policies for green belt land, open spaces and the location of major shopping centres will be set out.

Plans normally cover a period of about 20 years; they must be reviewed at least once in every five years and may be extended or altered at any time so that they are kept up to date. When they are submitted to the Minister copies are made available for public inspection. Objections or representations may be made to the Minister and a local public inquiry, at which any objections can be stated, is normally held under the direction of an inspector appointed by the Minister.

Details of the Government's proposals for changes in the administration of town and country planning in Great Britain were published in a White Paper in 1967 (see Reading List). The proposals include a radical alteration in the system of preparing and approving development plans and some changes in the method of development control. They are based on the recommendations of a Planning Advisory Group, which reported in 1965. The group suggested ways in which the techniques, procedures and machinery for town and country planning could be improved and simplified so that urgent

urban problems such as the increase in population, the continuing growth of traffic and the need for renewal could be dealt with more effectively. The highly centralised procedures introduced in the Acts of 1947 have led, the White Paper says, to long delays in reaching decisions, individual citizens have played an insufficient part in the planning procedures and the negative control of undesirable development has been emphasised to the detriment of positive planning for the creation of a pleasant environment.

The new proposals provide for the drawing up of structure plans for counties and large towns by the local planning authorities, showing the broad basic pattern of development, the transport system and identifying areas of major change. These plans would be subject to ministerial approval. Local plans, showing in detail how the policies of the structure plan would be implemented, would be prepared and approved by the local planning authorities. The Government also proposes that Ministers should delegate some of their responsibility for decisions on planning appeals, for example appeals regarding residential development on small sites, to selected inspectors. At present nearly two-thirds of appeals involve matters of purely local significance. Of all appeals subject to local public inquiries over the past five years more than 97 per cent were decided as the inspector recommended to the Minister. The Government is examining the procedures for planning proposals and appeals when the issues raise questions of national or regional policy or of technical complexity.

The devolution of detailed responsibility to local authorities and inspectors will enable Ministers to concentrate on main issues of policy and consider whether the physical environment as a whole is being properly shaped to meet evolving social and economic needs 'with realistic regard to investment programmes and priorities'. Under the new procedure decisions should be taken more quickly than at present. At the local level the Government aims to ensure that there are greater opportunities for the discussion of important changes at the formative stage so that they can be influenced by the people whose lives they will affect.

The Government intends that the new form of development plan should be introduced gradually where local planning authorities have appropriate areas and adequate resources, such as sufficient professional planning staff, to do so. The new procedures will take account of the growth of planning on a regional basis, for example, through the economic planning councils (see p. 8). The White Paper notes that in some cases local planning responsibilities cover too small an area and present local government boundaries often 'divide areas with competing and complementary needs and resources'. The structure of local government in Great Britain is at present under review. When local government is reorganised the new system would be generally introduced. The changes proposed in the White Paper require legislation. A Town and Country Planning Bill was introduced in the House of Commons in December 1967 to give effect to the proposals for England and Wales.

In Northern Ireland radical changes in the administration of planning, as set out in a White Paper published in 1964 and a Memorandum issued in 1966, are also being considered. The establishment of a Central Development Office is proposed: it would be responsible for the continuing review of the regional plan and for the preparation of area plans under the guidance of

steering committees composed of local authority representatives. The Central Office would also decide on applications for planning permission. In addition, local planning authorities would be responsible for preparing 'action plans' which include urban renewal schemes and other development or redevelopment projects within a defined neighbourhood or village. At present applications for permission to undertake development are the responsibility of local planning authorities, with a right of appeal to the Ministry.

GROWTH OF REGIONAL PLANNING¹

A certain amount of decentralisation of their functions by central government departments to regional organisations has taken place since the 1930s, but in general it has lacked co-ordination and has taken different forms to suit particular functions. There are six regional offices of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in various parts of England to encourage growth in the rate of house-building, particularly the expansion of slum clearance programmes. Gas and electricity boards and hospital boards are organised regionally for administrative efficiency and to maintain close contact with the general public: but their regional boundaries do not coincide. There has, moreover, been little planning at regional level.

The less prosperous regions of Britain are generally those which are heavily dependent on old-established industries such as cotton, coal-mining or shipbuilding which flourished in the nineteenth century, but have more recently been declining or growing less rapidly than other industries. The rate of unemployment in these regions is relatively high compared with the rest of the country: young people in particular have moved to areas where economic prospects are better. Not only is there a need for a change in the economic structure in these regions but often a need for the renewal of the social environment, particularly housing. Conversely over the past 20 years industrial and commercial investment in the south-east region and the Midlands has brought great prosperity, a persistent demand for labour and consequent pressure on housing and other social facilities.

In order to stimulate the expansion of the economy more quickly and evenly throughout the country successive governments have concluded, over the past few years, that it is essential to plan on a regional basis for the use and development of physical resources. In the opinion of the National Economic Development Council² 'a successful regional development programme would make it easier to achieve a national growth programme'. Regional planning has also been seen as a means of ensuring that policies for the various forms of land use, particularly urban development and communications, complemented each other. In a White Paper³ published in 1963 the Government recognised 'that the need to match jobs, land, transport and housing over the next 20 years in London and south-east England calls for a regional plan'.

¹For more detailed information see COI reference pamphlet *Regional Development in Britain* R.F.P. 5709/67.

²*Conditions Favourable to Faster Growth*, HMSO, 1963, 4s.

³*London—Employment: Housing: Land*, Cmd. 1952, HMSO, 1963, 2s.

In 1964 and 1965 the Government set up economic planning councils and boards in eight regions of England—the Northern, Yorkshire and Humberside, the East Midlands, East Anglia, the South-East, the South-West the West Midlands and the North-West—and in Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland has its own economic council. These new bodies provide the machinery for assessing the economic potential of each region and for working to achieve this within the framework of a national plan. The councils, which are composed of individuals appointed by the Government for their range of knowledge and experience of the region, assist with the formulation of regional plans and advise on their implementation. They have no executive powers. The boards, composed of senior civil servants from the Government's economic and social departments, help to draw up regional plans and co-ordinate the work of their departments in the regions.

In drawing up their regional and development plans the new planning bodies and local planning authorities are being guided by comprehensive studies of their regions' economic and social resources, several of which have become available in the past few years. In 1966 the first studies prepared by the economic planning councils were published (see Reading List): further studies are in preparation. The councils and boards are also undertaking special studies of such matters as industrial location, public investment and land use. The south-east planning council, for example, has set up sub-committees on communications, amenities, planning strategy and research. The north-west has a special committee for housing while Yorkshire and Humberside has an academic advisory committee. Others have appointed committees on subjects such as ports, derelict land or the development of the arts.

All the studies suggest that purely economic problems such as a high rate of unemployment within a region cannot be solved in isolation from social factors like the improvement of amenities and the growth of cultural activities, which do much to predispose people and industry towards moving into the region. Although the system of controlling the location of industry (see below) may help industrial development in less prosperous regions, industry and commerce may also be stimulated by the renewal of the fabric of regions now in decline. The Toothill report on the Scottish economy in 1961¹ commented that the absence of amenities principally in those areas still suffering from the aftermath of the industrial revolution had discouraged the establishment of new firms in Scotland.

Government Action

Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1962 and the Control of Office and Industrial Development Act 1965 industrial development certificates must be obtained from the Board of Trade before any industrial or commercial development can take place in Britain. In this way the Government can control the location of industry.

The Board of Trade may specify certain parts of the country as 'development areas'² where special measures are required to encourage the growth and better distribution of industry. Industrial development certificates are

¹Scottish Council, 1961, 25s.

²In 1967 most of Wales and Scotland, much of northern England, Merseyside and the far south-west of England.

usually easily available for development areas but are not issued readily for areas of prosperity. Successive governments have also offered financial and other incentives to commerce and industry to expand in development areas. Under the Local Employment Acts 1960 and 1963 and the Industrial Development Act 1966 investment grants and loans are available and factories may be provided by the Government in such areas. Similar aid is available in Northern Ireland. In the financial year 1967-68 the Board of Trade is expected to spend over £50 million on assistance to development areas. Supplementary financial help, related to labour costs, for manufacturers operating in development areas, has been introduced by the Government under the Finance Act 1967.

The Government instituted special control over office building in the south-east region and the Midlands in 1965 under the Control of Office and Industrial Development Act. Through the Location of Offices Bureau, set up in London in 1963, the Government also encourages the voluntary movement of office employment from the congested capital to areas where costs in rents and salaries are lower, and where there is room for expansion and living and travelling conditions for staff are better. By March 1967 the Bureau had succeeded in helping to transfer some 30,000 jobs away from central London. The Government has taken a lead by dispersing certain of its departments from London, for example, the offices of the Ordnance Survey have been removed to Southampton and the headquarters of the Post Office Savings Bank is to be on Clydeside.

New and expanded towns are also being developed in certain places where there is a potential for economic growth.

LAND VALUES

The Land Commission

The Land Commission, comprising a chairman and not more than eight other members, is appointed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Scotland. Although the commission has a considerable degree of independence it is subject to policy directions by the Ministers and operates in Great Britain within the framework of, and regulations made under, the Land Commission Act 1967. The commission has powers to acquire land compulsorily (after confirmation by the appropriate Minister) for development purposes. If land is bought in advance of need the commission has powers to manage and improve it. The commission's first priority is the provision of land for private enterprise house-building, particularly by small and medium-sized builders. It aims to ensure a steady supply of land for housing at reasonable prices where the demand is greatest. The commission has powers to impose a levy based on the development value of land (see below).

Betterment

In recent years the value of land for development in Britain has increased greatly as the demand for sites for houses, factories, roads and other building has grown. It is generally accepted that as control over development must be

undertaken in the public interest the increased value which development may confer on land should in some measure accrue to the community whose needs have created it. However, in the past it has proved extremely difficult to define and collect such 'betterment' value.

In 1942 the Uthwatt Committee, considering the question of betterment, recommended that the State should hold all land development rights. As a result of this conclusion the Town and Country Planning Acts 1947 laid down that owners of land with planning permission for development should pay a charge amounting to the whole of the estimated development value before carrying out any development. However, at a time—just after the second world war—when severe building restrictions were in force, the charge was considered by the public simply as a form of indirect taxation on land for which a building licence had been obtained. Moreover, as the restrictions on building were removed, it was thought that the charge might act as a brake on development. In 1953, therefore, the charge was lifted. Meanwhile, as post-war development gathered momentum, public authorities paid high prices for land for essential purposes: individuals found it expensive to buy their own homes. Conversely, private landowners and developers enjoyed financial gain on a large scale.

In the face of the ever-increasing price of land the Land Commission was set up in 1967 under the Land Commission Act to ensure that a substantial part of any significant development value of land, created by social needs, was enjoyed by the community. A betterment levy, amounting to 40 per cent of the development value initially,¹ was imposed on the seller. It is expected that, as a result, owners will not frustrate development by withholding their land in the hope of higher prices, since they will be gaining a proportion of its increased value: and the cost of land to the community will be reduced.

Compensation

The Town and Country Planning Acts 1947, which embodied the principle that all land development rights belonged to the State, laid down that the compensation value of land acquired compulsorily for public purposes was limited to its existing use value. A fund of £300 million was established to make payments to owners who claimed hardship as a result of loss of development value. When development charges were abolished in 1953, the payment of claims from the fund was suspended. In 1954 owners were allowed compensation for planning restrictions and compulsory purchase by local authorities but this was limited to the estimated development value of their land in 1947 in addition to existing use value. The compulsory purchase value of land was, therefore, often lower than the market value. As a result local authorities were impeded in their planning duties by an unwillingness to cause what was regarded as injustice to owners. The Town and Country Planning Acts 1959 corrected this anomaly by providing that the owner of land compulsorily purchased should receive the estimated full open market value of his land. Compensation payable for the loss of development value where planning restrictions have been imposed remains as it was under the 1954 Act.

¹The rate is to be increased progressively to 45 per cent and 50 per cent at reasonably short intervals. As acquisition by the commission progresses the rate will be under review.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF PLANNING

NEW TOWNS

The new towns of Britain are comprehensively planned communities, pioneering examples of modern urban planning. 'Garden cities', the forerunners of new towns, were originally conceived by Ebenezer Howard at the end of the nineteenth century for reasons of health and social advantage; he reacted against the overcrowded conditions in the industrial towns of Britain and advocated the growth of new self-contained communities in the countryside where housing, jobs and all other necessary facilities would be provided. Letchworth (1903) and Welwyn Garden City (1920) near London, were established on these lines. One of the major advantages of new towns is the solution they offer to the problem of urban sprawl—the uncontrolled growth of towns, often to the point where they merge together—destroying natural beauty and intensifying congestion in central areas designed only for small populations.

The Barlow Report published in 1940, which drew on the experience of garden city planning, contained recommendations for the dispersal of industry and population from congested areas, particularly London, to new towns. Sir Patrick Abercrombie, in his Greater London Plan of 1944, proposed the dispersal of over 1 million people to new towns some 25 or 30 miles from the capital, where employment would be provided. Many of the recommendations of the New Towns Committee, set up in 1945 under the chairmanship of Lord Reith to consider all aspects of the planning and development of new towns, particularly the administrative and financial machinery required, were embodied in the first New Towns Act, which was passed in 1946.

Under the New Towns Acts 1946 (for Scotland) and 1965 (which consolidated earlier legislation for England and Wales) the Minister of Housing and Local Government (in England) and the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales have powers to designate any area of land, including an existing town or village, as the site of a new town. The Minister of Development in Northern Ireland has similar powers under the New Towns Act (Northern Ireland) 1965. The appropriate local authorities, interested government departments and other bodies are consulted about proposals: public local inquiries are held to consider objections to them from interested parties such as farmers, whose land would be required for development.

Administration

Development Corporations

The appropriate Minister appoints a development corporation for each new town (a development commission in Northern Ireland) to be responsible for its planning and development. The corporation consists of a chairman, deputy chairman, and not more than seven members who have a wide variety of experience and knowledge. It has powers to acquire (by agreement or compulsory purchase), manage and dispose of land and other property, to carry out building, including that of houses, factories, schools, offices and shops and to make provision for public services such as water,

sewerage and electricity. Each corporation has a staff of executive officers including architects, engineers and finance officers.

The development corporation prepares a 'master plan' for the new town (usually commissioning private consultants for the purpose). The plan shows the location of industrial and residential areas, the town centre, parkland, recreational areas or other open spaces, and provides for transport systems and all the necessary amenities which the corporation thinks will provide for the best possible conditions of life, work and recreation for the inhabitants. The plan is flexible enough to allow for growth and change. In recent years this has proved particularly important with the rapid growth in car ownership (see p. 25). The master plan is submitted to the appropriate Minister for his approval (given after consultation with the local authorities and other interested bodies and consideration of representations from the public) and becomes the framework within which development proceeds.

Particular attention is given to the establishment of a good working relationship between the new town development corporation and the local authorities: often liaison committees are set up. A development corporation usually includes local councillors among its members: they are appointed for their personal expertise, not as representatives of their councils.

Commission for the New Towns

Under the New Towns Act 1959 a Commission for the New Towns in England and Wales was set up to supervise the final stages of a new town's development, when the period of rapid population growth has been completed. So far the responsibility for four new towns, Crawley, Hatfield, Hemel Hempstead and Welwyn Garden City, has passed from their development corporations to the commission. Its function is to maintain and enhance the substantial assets of land and property that have been built up by the development corporation, while paying attention to the purpose for which the town was developed and to the needs and wishes of the people living there. The commission may consist of not more than 15 members appointed by the Ministers. Its headquarters are in London, but it delegates a range of its responsibilities to local committees who co-operate with local authorities, particularly in housing management.

Finance

The capital works undertaken by new town development corporations and by the Commission for the New Towns are financed by advances made to them by the Ministers under the New Towns Acts. The original Act in 1946 fixed the limit of these advances at £50 million but this was increased by successive Acts and in 1967 stood at £800 million. Commitments were running at about £60 million to £65 million a year in 1966 and over the following three or four years were expected to rise to £80 million to £90 million a year as development proceeded in towns recently designated. The money is being repaid by the corporations over a period of 60 years out of the income from the property. Annual reports and accounts are submitted by the corporations and the commission to Parliament.

The new towns have proved to be a profitable long-term investment. The commission reported in 1966 that the market value of commercial assets

(excluding housing) in Crawley and Hemel Hempstead, for example, was estimated at £27 million—a capital appreciation of some 60 per cent nearly 20 years after their designation.

Progress

There are 24 new towns in Great Britain at various stages of development. Stevenage in Hertfordshire was the first to be designated—in November 1946. Basildon and Harlow in Essex, Crawley in Sussex, Bracknell in Berkshire and Hatfield, Hemel Hempstead and Welwyn in Hertfordshire (all designated in the late 1940s) are, with Stevenage, helping to absorb overspill¹ from the London area. At this time in Scotland East Kilbride and Glenrothes and (in 1955) Cumbernauld were designated primarily to provide homes and work for people from Glasgow. Cwmbran in South Wales provides housing accommodation for workers in the area. Aycliffe in Durham and Corby in Northamptonshire were designated to fulfil the same function in areas of potential industrial growth. Peterlee in Durham was designated to provide homes and alternative employment for miners in the area.

In the 1960s the problems of providing homes for the increasing number of households from congested cities requiring higher standards of housing led to the designation of further new towns—Skelmersdale in Lancashire and Runcorn in Cheshire to relieve the pressure on Liverpool and Merseyside; Redditch in Worcestershire and Dawley in Shropshire to cater for Birmingham; and Washington in Durham to take population from Newcastle and Tyneside. Washington is also planned as a centre of industrial growth in the north-east of England. Livingston and Irvine are being developed partly to accommodate overspill from Glasgow: they are also designed to be centres of industrial growth in central Scotland.

Estimates of the increase in the population made in the 1960s suggest, however, that more provision is necessary. In 1966 it was estimated that the population of Britain had risen sharply since the national census held in 1961 by 2 million to 54·7 million. Projected estimates of the population made by the Registrar-General in 1967 show that there are expected to be some 60 million people in Britain by 1980, rising to about 72 million by the year 2000—an increase of nearly 17 million in 33 years. In order to cope with this expansion the designated areas of some existing new towns have been extended and their target populations have been increased: larger new towns accommodating a quarter of a million people and more are envisaged.

In *The South-East Study*, published in 1964 (see Reading List), certain areas were proposed for major expansion, designed to attract population and employment away from London. A subsequent review of the study confirmed its estimate that a million Londoners would need to be rehoused outside the conurbation by 1981. In order to help cater for this need the Government has proposed a new town (the largest ever designated) for the area around Bletchley in north Buckinghamshire: it will be known as Milton Keynes and

¹The authorities in the larger cities in Britain find it difficult to obtain land within their boundaries on which to build sufficient dwellings to accommodate their growing populations or people displaced when slums are cleared: they have to make provision elsewhere for this 'overspill'.

will have a population of about a quarter of a million by the end of the century. It is also proposed that the existing towns of Ipswich, Northampton and Peterborough¹ in eastern England should be expanded greatly as recommended in the study, to provide accommodation, employment and other facilities more quickly (under the New Towns Act) than in earlier new towns. Further studies have been made of proposals for development in the Southampton-Portsmouth area in South Hampshire and around Ashford in Kent, recommended in 1964. The emphasis has been on selecting places for major expansion outside the metropolitan region—that is, beyond 40 miles from the centre of London.

Following proposals made in the studies of the west Midlands and the north-west regions of England (see Reading List) development in the Wellington-Oakengates area of Shropshire (with Dawley) to take additional population from Birmingham and in the Preston-Leyland-Chorley area of Lancashire to relieve congestion in Manchester is at present under review; they are believed to be areas of potential industrial growth within their regions. In addition, Warrington, an existing town in the north-west, is to be doubled in size to absorb overspill from Manchester. Newtown in mid-Wales is to be expanded to encourage economic growth there and probably to take overspill from the Midlands. Studies are being undertaken into the possibilities of major development in the regions of the Humber, Severn and Tay rivers to help to accommodate the projected rise in the population of Britain by the end of the century.

In Northern Ireland a comprehensive programme of urban development is being undertaken on the basis of Sir Robert Matthew's survey of the Belfast region and of a report on economic development published in 1965 (see Reading List). The programme includes the creation of a new city at Craigavon, and this is now being established. It will help to provide homes for people from Belfast and is expected to become an area of major industrial growth. Other new towns, of which two, Antrim and Ballymena, have been designated, are to be developed as centers of economic growth.

Characteristics

More than half a million people have moved into the new towns during the past 20 years. Young people form a higher proportion of their populations than in the country as a whole.

Many of the towns are organised on the 'neighbourhood' unit principle, each residential area having, for example, its own primary school, welfare clinic and shops within some ten minutes' walking distance and growing as a social unit. Neighbourhoods are of differing sizes, providing homes and facilities for 4,000–5,000 people. The main town centre of a new town usually contains a large shopping area with department stores, public buildings (including a town hall and law courts), entertainment facilities, health centres, public houses and restaurants, car parks, churches, a library and possibly an hotel and a college of further education. Many town centres have pedestrian precincts: the centres of Stevenage and Cumbernauld are completely traffic-free areas.

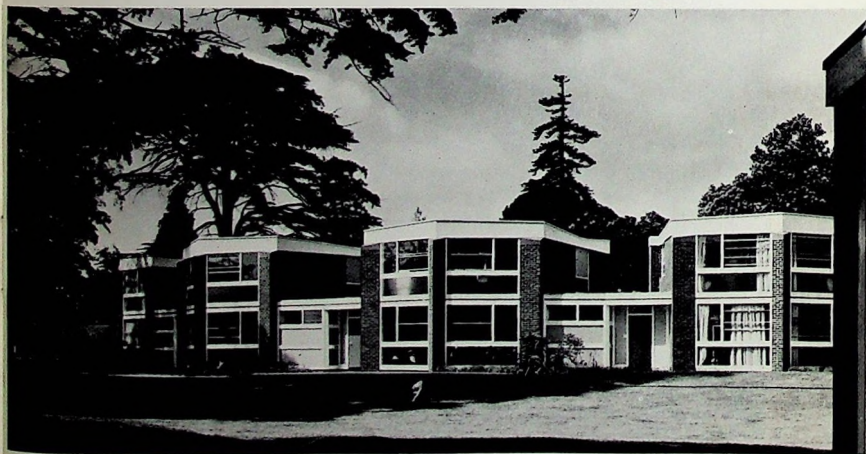
¹ Formally designated in May 1967.

HOUSING

New blocks of flats in the Gorbals area of Glasgow, Scotland. Some 30 areas of the city, housing one-third of its population of one million, are being redeveloped by the local housing authority.

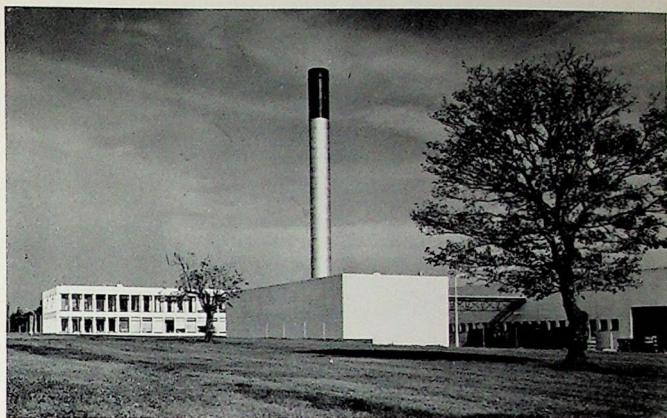


Private housing development at Weybridge, Surrey (nearly 20 miles from London), which won a Civic Trust award for good design in 1965.

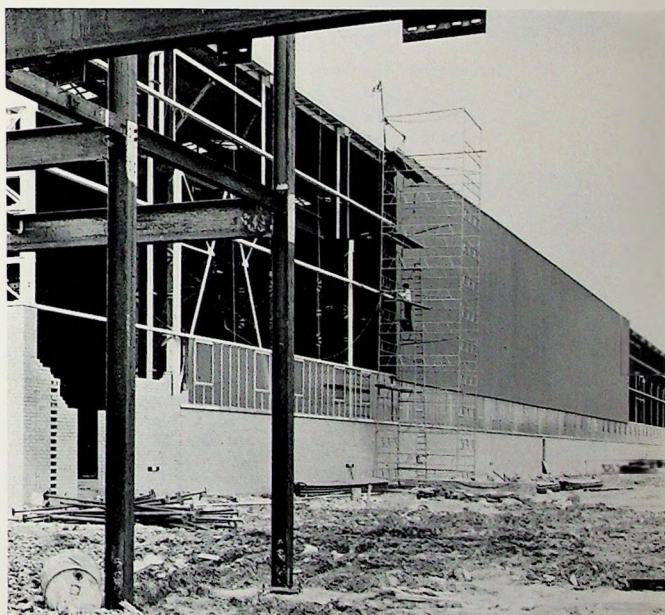


NEW TOWNS Industrial Development

At Basildon : A factory occupied by Yardley Ltd., the cosmetics firm.



At Craigavon : A £6½ million plant under construction for the Goodyear company to manufacture industrial rubber products.



Housing

At Runcorn :
A children's
play area near
their homes.



Social Services



Above, at Glenrothes : A new
high school, accommodating
1,150 pupils.

Right, at Harlow : A surgery in
one of the industrial health
centres.



NATIONAL PARKS

Snowdon, at 3,560 feet (more than 1,000 metres), the highest peak in Wales.



An information centre in the Snowdonia National Park.



Warden service in the Lake District.





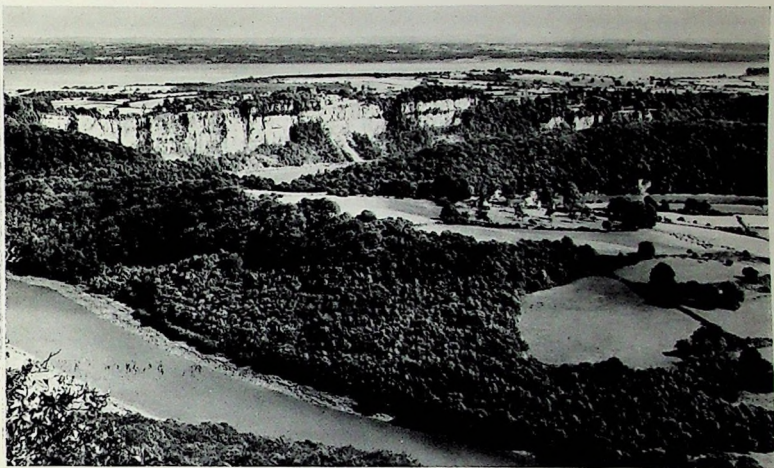
Ski-slopes in the Cairngorms,
near Aviemore.



Pony-trekking in Gortin
Glen Forest Park.

CONSERVATION

An area of forest nature reserve in Monmouthshire. Apart from mixed woodland, rich and varied herb flora are found there.



A windmill, 70 feet (21 metres) high and built more than 150 years ago, being restored as an ancient monument.



Sir Winston Churchill's study at Chartwell Manor, Kent. His former home has become the property of the National Trust.



AMENITY Below left, pine trees, some 30 years old, growing on an old coal tip in South Wales. The 'soil' is black and almost pure coal.

Below right, members of a local preservation society working to clear rubbish from beauty spots.

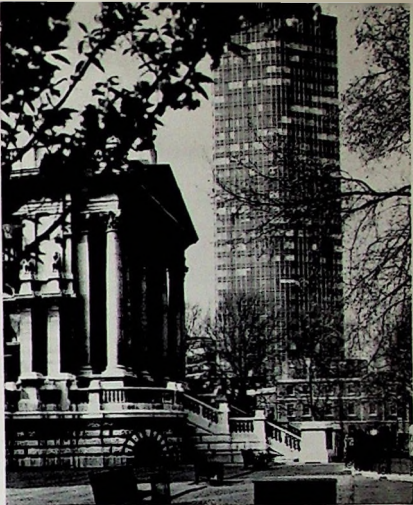


Below, planting of semi-mature trees, some 30 feet (9 metres) high, alongside a motorway to improve the landscape.

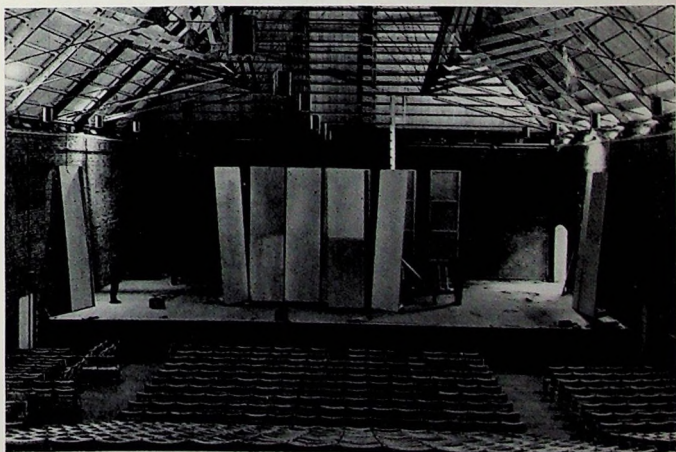


OLD AND NEW

The Tate Gallery, opened in 1897, and Vickers House, an office block opened in 1963 —neighbours in London.



Below, disused malt houses, built in the mid-nineteenth century, being converted into a concert hall at Aldeburgh, Suffolk.



Industrial and Commercial Development

Since one of the basic concepts of establishing new towns was that they should be self-contained balanced communities, it is an important task of a development corporation to attract a number of diverse industrial and commercial companies to its town. The development corporations either build factories themselves and let them to firms or lease sites on which firms can build their own factories.

Some 824 new factories covering nearly 32 million square feet (3 million square metres) and employing 135,000 people had been provided in the new towns by the end of 1966. Basildon, 18 years after designation, had more than 4.5 million square feet (415,000 square metres) of factory space completed—the largest area of any new town—where 20,000 people were employed. Skelmersdale, whose master plan was published only in 1965, had more than 1 million square feet (92,000 square metres) employing some 2,650 people. Apart from purely manufacturing industry the new towns are keen to encourage the growth of office employment in order to make available a greater variety of jobs, particularly for school leavers. By 1966 they had nearly 500 new offices covering 2.3 million square feet (210,000 square metres) employing 14,500 people. Some branches of government departments situated in the new towns include the headquarters of the Meteorological Office in Bracknell and the Scottish headquarters of the Land Commission at Cumbernauld. Rents of offices and industrial sites in the well-established towns like Crawley and Hemel Hempstead, which have increased greatly over the last decade, reflect the demand from industrialists to move into these growth areas. The rate of unemployment in the new towns is generally low.

Housing

A variety of housing is available in new towns including two-storey houses, flats and maisonettes. The greatest demand is for houses with gardens. Densities vary but are generally at about 12–20 dwellings an acre (0.4 hectares). Care is taken to provide buildings of varied architectural types and to avoid monotonous repetition by a range of layouts, for example, in courts or closes and by skilful use of contours and a high standard of landscaping, particularly the provision of trees. Several awards for good design and landscaping have been made to new town architects.

By the end of 1966 nearly 160,000 new dwellings had been built in the new towns and a further 17,500 were under construction. The new towns, with their large continuing housing programmes and the availability of large sites, are able to benefit most from systems of industrialised building. About one-third of dwellings are at present built by these methods. Expenditure on housing amounts to some 60 per cent of the total capital expenditure on new towns.

In England and Wales more than two-thirds of dwellings are rented from the development corporations; they are subsidised although corporations are expected to apply the subsidies according to need. About 20 per cent of dwellings are owner-occupied at present: to meet an increasing demand a home ownership target of 50 per cent has been set by the Government. Development corporations build some houses expressly for sale or may make existing rented houses available to tenants for sale; others provide land for houses to be built by private developers.

Most of the new town residents consist of families with young children. It is estimated that at present more than 80 per cent of people living in the new towns are under 45 years of age (compared with the national average of 60 per cent) and some 4 per cent only are over 60 (the national average is 17 per cent). However, the Government has advised the development corporations to provide some 15 per cent of their housing for old people, primarily to strengthen family ties and achieve a more balanced community.

A comprehensive study (sponsored by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the Scottish Office and the Welsh Office) is being made of the present pattern of ownership and management of housing in new towns in Great Britain. Physical, financial, economic, social, administrative and legal factors which may be relevant to or condition future ownership and management are to be considered. People living in the new towns are being consulted.

Industrial selection registers are kept by some cities, for example, London and Glasgow, to try to ensure that employment vacancies in new towns which carry the offer of a house with them are filled by people in the cities in need of housing. Preference is given to those on the councils' waiting lists for houses as well as existing local authority tenants who are willing to move to the new town. A note is made of the type of job for which each applicant is suitable. When the new town employment exchange is notified of vacancies, it nominates people with suitable skills from these registers.

Provision of Amenities

It is considered particularly important that the provision of schools, medical services, shops and facilities for recreation and entertainment in the new towns should be co-ordinated with industrial and housing development. The predominantly young population makes additional demands on services and amenities. In the early years of a town's development there is usually a rapidly increasing birth-rate, but in the long-term the population is expected to become more balanced.

About 320 new schools, providing places for 154,300 pupils, had been completed by the end of 1966. The Royal Institute of Public Administration is undertaking a research project to forecast future school needs in new towns. Colleges of further education are being built as the demand for them increases.

Specially designed health centres, sited near to shops and patients' homes and staffed by doctors, dentists and other health and welfare workers, are to be found in many new towns. Harlow has pioneered a comprehensive community medical service, including a unique industrial health service.

More than 2,800 new shops had been completed in the new towns by the end of 1966. Some towns, such as Welwyn and Hemel Hempstead, have become regional centres, attracting a large proportion of their shoppers from perhaps 10-15 miles away.

As new towns become well established and their populations grow large enough to give the necessary support, they can offer a greater variety of facilities for recreation and entertainment, including dance halls, youth centres, sports stadia, swimming pools, golf courses, theatres and arts centres.

A wide range of local clubs and societies for various hobbies and interests have grown up through the enthusiasm and individual effort of the new town residents often in their own 'neighbourhood' groups. Children's play areas, youth clubs, playing fields and parks are also dispersed within each town.

Transport

The rate of car ownership in new towns has increased rapidly since the late 1940s-50s when many were first designated. A survey in Bracknell, for example, has estimated the future level of car ownership per head of the population at 0.4 (representing 1.4 cars per family) compared with only 0.15 as recently as 1961. This movement is likely to continue (see p. 25) and one garage for each dwelling is provided in most new town plans now being drawn up. Multi-storey car parks are being built in or near town centres.

New towns planned in the 1960s provide for segregation of fast from slow traffic and of vehicles from pedestrians. Pedestrian underpasses and foot-bridges are being constructed to link footpaths giving access to shops, schools and open spaces while traffic is accommodated at various levels on flyovers and separate routes according to its purpose. The centre of Stevenage is reserved solely for pedestrians: a network of footpaths and cyclepaths has been developed there. A fundamental principle of Cumbernauld's development is that pedestrians and motor traffic should be segregated to the maximum extent possible on Radburn principles¹ with multi-level access routes.

TOWN DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

As an alternative method of relieving urban congestion, providing homes for a rapidly rising population and giving encouragement to industrial growth, the Town Development Act 1952 and the Housing and Town Development (Scotland) Act 1957 provide for agreements to be made between the local authorities in big cities with overspill problems and those in small country towns willing to accept people and industry from the cities in order to strengthen their economic base. The approval of the Minister of Housing and Local Government (in England and Wales) and the Secretary of State for Scotland is required. The exporting and receiving authorities directly concerned with the development contribute towards its cost: government grants and subsidies are also available.

The Greater London Council has made agreements with other local authorities to provide a total of some 80,000 dwellings. By mid-1967 some 28,000 London families had moved to 23 towns (up to 150 miles away) expanded expressly to accommodate them, including Andover and Basingstoke in Hampshire, Thetford in Norfolk and Haverhill in Suffolk, and some 15 million square feet (1.4 million square metres) of factory space had been completed or was under construction to provide employment for them. It is proposed that Swindon in Wiltshire be developed further (as recommended in *The South-East Study*, see p. 13) to accommodate a population of 200,000 by 1981, 75,000 of whom will be from London. Accommodation for families

¹A term derived from a system introduced in Radburn, New Jersey, USA, where the arrangements for the movement of pedestrians and vehicles were planned as physically independent but related systems (see p. 26).

from Birmingham (some 16,250 dwellings) has also been arranged under town development schemes. Development is being promoted by the Northumberland County Council at Cramlington and Killingworth, near Newcastle, to provide homes and employment for families on Tyneside and to encourage faster economic growth in the north-east region of England. At Cramlington local authorities are working in conjunction with private enterprise.

In addition to provision for Glasgow overspill in new towns, 12,000 homes have been provided by local authorities and 8,200 by the Scottish Special Housing Association¹—all in existing towns.

A planned balance of growth in population and employment is considered vital to the success of the schemes. Industries are attracted to the expanded towns since a sufficient labour force can be guaranteed and costs are generally lower than they are in the large cities. Industrial selection registers (see p. 16) are used for these schemes also, in London and Glasgow.

The implementation of a town development scheme changes the nature of the existing town. Apart from the erection of new houses and the development of factories, sewerage and water schemes need to be extended and other services including schools and public transport provided. The town centre is often redeveloped to accommodate larger shopping areas, public buildings and social facilities.

NATIONAL PARKS AND NATURE RESERVES

National parks in England and Wales are extensive areas of beautiful and relatively wild country which may be mountainous, moorland or lakeland, where the beauty of the landscape is preserved, facilities for public open-air enjoyment are provided and wild life protected. Established farming land is maintained.

Nature reserves are areas set aside for conservation and research. The concept of nature conservation is primarily scientific, but facilities are available for the general enjoyment and understanding of nature.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many voluntary organisations such as the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England as well as the National Trust (see p. 29) were concerned to protect the countryside from the ravages of uncontrolled industrial development and to preserve the rights of the public to use footpaths and commons.² In 1942 the Scott Committee in its report, *Land Utilisation in Rural Areas*,³ considered these questions and recommended the establishment of national parks and nature reserves. In further studies⁴ the concept of a national park was defined and the appointment of a National Parks Commission, an independent administrative body to uphold the principles of national parks, was proposed. Two

¹A statutory body established in 1937 to erect houses for letting to supplement building by local authorities.

²Areas of land to which ordinary people have legal or customary rights of access, which they exercise in common, for example, for open air recreation.

³Cmd. 6378, 1942, 4s.

⁴Dower Report, Cmd. 6628, HMSO, 1945, 1s.; Hobhouse Committee Report, Cmd. 7121, HMSO, 1947, 4s. 6d.

wild life conservation committees,¹ reporting in 1947, recommended the selection of a series of nature reserves, and the establishment of research stations.

Under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 the Minister of Housing and Local Government (in England) and the Secretary of State for Wales have powers to appoint a National Parks Commission and confirm the designation of national parks. In Northern Ireland the Minister of Development has similar powers under the Amenities Lands Act 1965 to designate national parks and to nominate, as an advisory body, the Ulster Countryside Committee. There is no comparable legislation for Scotland because the circumstances there are different (but see pp. 21 and 23).

The Natural Environment Research Council, set up in 1965, has powers, with the approval of the Secretary of State for Education and Science, to appoint a Nature Conservancy (originally constituted in 1949) which may establish and maintain areas in Great Britain as nature reserves on behalf of the council. In Northern Ireland nature reserves are designated and an advisory committee set up by the Minister of Development under the Amenities Lands Act 1965.

Administration

National Parks Commission

The National Parks Commission in England and Wales is a corporate advisory body consisting of a chairman and a number of other members, including naturalists and other experts. It designates national parks and other, generally less extensive, 'areas of outstanding natural beauty' (with the approval of the Ministers) and encourages the provision and improvement of facilities for recreation and enjoyment in national parks, particularly the study of nature. The commission also submits reports on the creation of continuous long-distance footpaths and bridleways. It has responsibilities for establishing information centres and encouraging the observance of a *Country Code*.² The commission makes an annual report to Parliament.

Powers to preserve and enhance natural beauty, including exercising control over development in the parks, are held by local planning authorities of the areas in which they are situated. The authorities usually set up committees or joint planning boards where the extent of the park or area brings it under the jurisdiction of more than one planning authority. One-third of the members are nominated by the Minister. They prepare development plans and annual programmes for the parks over which they administer control. The commission advises the Government and local authorities on general policy and particular problems.

Nearly all the land in the national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty remains in private ownership. People continue to live and work in the designated areas. Designation as a park or area does not imply automatic right of access by the public but local authorities try to secure agreement with owners for additional rights for the public. Facilities to promote general enjoyment within the parks include restaurants, youth hostels, camping sites and car parks. The responsibilities of local authorities include preserving

¹Huxley Report (E&W), Cmd. 7122, HMSO, 1947; Cmd. 7235, HMSO, 1947.

²Rules for visitors to the countryside, for example, fasten all gates, leave no litter, keep to the paths across farmland (published by HMSO, 6d.).

and planting trees, clearing unsightly development, improving derelict land, providing access to open country and acquiring land and erecting buildings for park purposes and appointing wardens. The Peak District National Park won a European Diploma from the Council of Europe in 1966 in recognition of the high quality of the conservation measures taken in the park.

Finance

The local planning authorities in England and Wales may obtain special grants from the Exchequer (after consultation with the Ministers and the commission) of 75 per cent of the cost of carrying out their responsibilities in national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty. For the creation and maintenance of long-distance footpaths and bridleways grants of 100 per cent are available. In Northern Ireland grants of 50 per cent of the cost of improvement may be made.

Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy in Great Britain is a committee of the Natural Environment Research Council which supports research in the earth sciences and ecology. The conservancy consists of 18 members, most of whom are eminent scientists. It conserves wild plants and animals and the environment in which they live, in nature reserves. It gives scientific advice and organises and develops research at its own research stations. Recent research has included the consideration of risks to wild life, particularly birds, from toxic chemicals used in agriculture and a study of the Norfolk Broads region which led to recommendations on ways of maintaining and developing the area's waterways for recreational purposes and for research into the wild life there. About half the area of nature reserves is open to the public; by agreement between the conservancy and owners, others may be visited by permit holders. Regional officers appointed in various regions of Britain have executive responsibility for conservation.

The conservancy is taking part in the five-year International Biological Programme which started in 1967, the object of which is the worldwide study of biological productivity and human welfare. In Scotland the study of productivity in Loch Leven (famous for its trout fishery and an important site for wildfowl) forms part of this programme.

Finance

Grants for conservation are available from the Department of Education and Science through the Natural Environment Research Council under the Science and Technology Act 1965. They are extended to such organisations as the Wildfowl Trust towards its research programme, for example, and to university departments.

Progress

National Parks

Ten national parks have been established in England and Wales. They are the Peak District (the first to be designated, in 1950), the Yorkshire Dales,

the Lake District, Northumberland and the North York Moors in the north of England, Snowdonia, the Pembrokeshire Coast and the Brecon Beacons in Wales, and Exmoor and Dartmoor in the south-west of England. They cover some 5,260 square miles (13,600 square kilometres) or 9 per cent of the total area of England and Wales. The 23 'areas of outstanding natural beauty', including the Cotswolds, Dorset, the Sussex Downs and Cornwall, cover a further 3,800 square miles (9,840 square kilometres) or some 6 per cent of the total area of England and Wales. About one-third of the coastline is protected. There are also nearly 1,300 miles (2,100 kilometres) of long-distance footpaths and bridleways—the longest of which is the Pennine Way stretching 250 miles (402 kilometres) from Derbyshire along the Pennine Chain to the Cheviot Hills in Scotland.

The designation of a national park around the Fermanagh lakes in Northern Ireland is under consideration. The coast from Larne to Portrush, with the glens, an inland area in County Armagh near Newry, the River Lagan near Belfast, an area round part of Lough Foyle and the Mourne area have been designated as areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Although there are no national parks in Scotland five large areas of outstanding scenic beauty are subject to special planning control. In this way close supervision is maintained by the Secretary of State for Scotland over development in these areas. They are Loch Lomond—Trossachs; Glen Affric—Glen Cannich—Strath Farrar; Ben Nevis—Glen Coe—Black Mount; the Cairngorms; and Loch Torridon—Loch Maree—Little Loch Broom (in Wester Ross).

Forest Parks

In addition to the national parks, there are seven national forest parks in Great Britain covering half a million acres (202,500 hectares) and administered by the Forestry Commission. The commission is responsible for promoting the interests of forestry, the development of afforestation and the production and supply of timber in Great Britain. The forest parks are Argyll (the first, created in the 1930s), Glen Trool, Glen More and the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park in Scotland, the Forest of Dean and the Wye Valley Woods on the borders of England and Wales, Snowdonia in Wales and the Border Forest Park on the borders of England and Scotland. Facilities for recreation such as the provision of camping sites and opportunities for pony-trekking, nature study and other open-air activities are provided by the Forestry Commission in parts of the parks not used purely for afforestation. The New Forest in Hampshire, although not a forest park, is also open to the public. Northern Ireland has two forest parks—Tollymore Park in County Down and Gortin Glen Forest in County Tyrone.

Nature Reserves

There are 122 national nature reserves in Great Britain covering some 256,500 acres (102,600 hectares) of which over 64,000 acres (25,600 hectares) comprise the Cairngorms—one of the largest reserves in Europe. Fifteen local nature reserves are managed by local authorities, in consultation with the Nature Conservancy. National nature reserves have usually been chosen because they support types of vegetation or species of scientific interest.

Forest Nature Reserves

In addition to the nature reserves, there are thirteen forest nature reserves in Great Britain. Of these, nine have been created by agreement between the Forestry Commission and the Nature Conservancy and consist of forest land managed by the commission.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

There are some 2,200 sites of special scientific interest in various parts of Britain. They are scheduled as such by the Nature Conservancy under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They remain largely in private ownership. Local planning authorities must consult the conservancy about any proposed development there.

The Council for Nature

The Council for Nature is an independent voluntary organisation (established in 1958) of some 450 natural history and conservation societies concerned with averting threats to wild life in Britain. It receives grants from the Department of Education and Science and other bodies.

Leisure in the Countryside

The authorities with responsibilities for conservation are concerned to reconcile their duties with the increasing demand for recreational facilities in Britain. Increases in personal incomes¹ (coupled with the introduction of a shorter working week) and in the number of cars in use—to some nine and a half million in 1966 (and rising by 1 million a year, see p. 25)—are primary causes of the increase in outdoor recreational activity. An American study² has shown that higher standards of education and health are also important features in the amount and nature of demand for recreation. The number of university students, 188,900 in Britain in 1966, was double the figure ten years before and the proportion of schoolchildren considered to be in a satisfactory state of health—99.6 per cent—was the highest on record in 1964–65.

Some 60 per cent of the working population took one or more holidays away from home in 1964. The British Travel Association (BTA)—Britain's national tourist office—estimates that in the decade 1954–64 the number of people who took more than one holiday annually increased by 200 per cent. It is also becoming an increasingly widespread habit for the town-dweller with his family to motor to the countryside or coast at the week-ends, especially during the summer months. A survey in 1963 showed that 29 million people made trips away from home for pleasure over the Whitsun holiday. Moreover, it was found that families were twice as likely to make a trip if they owned a car than if they did not. The density of development along the coastline of Britain is causing particular concern. The BTA estimates that more than 65 per cent of all holiday-makers—some 18 million to 20 million people—stay in coastal resorts annually, many of whom are accommo-

¹Average weekly earnings (of manual workers) have risen by 65 per cent over the decade 1956–65 while retail prices rose by 34 per cent over the same period.

²*Outdoor Recreation for America*, published in 1962.

dated in holiday camps, caravan¹ or camping sites which have proliferated over the last decade. Congestion is further increased by the fact that two-thirds of all annual holidays are taken in the peak months of July and August.

In a densely populated country such as Britain there is intense pressure on land use in national parks, notably for industrial development and as training ground for the armed forces. In recent years decisions have been taken to build an oil refinery on the Pembrokeshire coast, to allow Manchester to utilise some of the water resources of the Lake District to meet the city's growing needs and to site defence installations on the North York Moors. Decisions such as these are usually taken only after careful study by the government departments and local authorities concerned and after open discussion at public inquiries.

The Proposed Countryside Commissions

The Government is to reconstitute the National Parks Commission as a Countryside Commission whose powers and functions will be extended to include responsibility for the countryside generally. A White Paper, *Leisure in the Countryside—England and Wales*, published in 1966, gives details of the Government's proposals which will enable a rising and increasingly mobile population to enjoy its leisure time in the countryside or at the coast without spoiling what it goes there to seek. If the national parks are to retain their distinctive character, the White Paper points out, it is essential to make new provision for the enjoyment of the countryside elsewhere, both to meet public demand and to relieve the pressure of people and cars on remote or outstandingly beautiful places. The Countryside Commission will encourage the provision of opportunities for gregarious activities in selected places, in conjunction with the Ministers and local planning authorities. In particular 'country parks' are to be provided by local authorities within easy reach of towns (this will also ease traffic congestion on main roads) where people might picnic or ramble and where children can play games. These parks will generally be small natural areas, often with expanses of water for swimming or boating. Grants will be available for the acquisition of land and the provision of services including car parks.

The Government also proposes² to give financial support to the British Waterways Board to maintain a network of more than 1,400 miles of inland waterways and rivers, which are suitable for pleasure cruising. They will be known as 'cruiseways'. The number of pleasure craft licences has increased five-fold in ten years. Greater provision is also to be made for other recreational pursuits along the cruiseways, such as angling, canoeing and field (nature) studies. In addition, the Government has suggested that reservoirs could be increasingly utilised for bathing and sailing. Swimming is believed to be the most actively pursued of all recreations in Great Britain. Evidence of the popularity of sailing in Britain is given by the Royal Yachting Association which estimates that half a million people take part: there was an increase of 80 per cent in club membership in the decade 1954–64.

¹The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 controls the establishment of caravan sites.

²*British Waterways: Recreation and Amenity*, Cmnd. 3401, HMSO, 1967, 1s.

Under the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 a Countryside Commission is also to be established for Scotland to provide and assist in the development and improvement of facilities for the enjoyment of the countryside and to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. The Act gives local planning authorities powers to establish country parks and to execute proposals for long-distance routes made by the commission. In this way the needs of the increasing number of tourists—nearly 5.5 million in 1964—and the leisure requirements of those who live and work in Scotland may be met. The popularity of winter sports there, particularly in the Cairngorms, has increased: in 1964 an estimated 25,000 skiers were out on Scottish ski slopes. A major winter sports centre is being developed at Aviemore. The commission will help to ensure that the places where recreational facilities are centred, like Aviemore, are carefully chosen so that sporadic haphazard development does not spread over the countryside and destroy its beauty.

Many of the Government's proposals had been suggested at two conferences held in 1963 and 1965, organised by the Nature Conservancy and presided over by the Duke of Edinburgh, on the subject of 'The Countryside in 1970', when the whole problem of the future conservation of the countryside and their role in its development was considered by representatives of government departments, and recreational and amenity bodies, and by scientists, educationalists, developers and owners. Further study is being made, for example, of environmental education and industrial development and the countryside.

To help with the formulation of co-ordinated long-term policies for the coast the National Parks Commission organised regional conferences (held in 1966 and 1967) to study the special problems of the coastline in England and Wales and the measures required to deal with them: in 1966 local authorities were asked by the Minister to draw up plans, showing areas to be protected and other parts where development, particularly of holiday facilities, might be concentrated (see Reading List). The National Trust's (see p. 29) £2 million *Enterprise Neptune* campaign to acquire the finest remaining unspoilt stretches of the coast and protect them from development has received a government contribution of £250,000 and a further £7,500 from the Northern Ireland Government. The BTA is studying trends in the use of the coast for holiday purposes; the Nature Conservancy is examining and classifying its scientific and educational assets and the Sports Council¹ is collecting and collating the views of the main organisations.

Recent legislative action taken to increase the facilities available to the public include the Commons Registration Act 1965, the purpose of which is to find out and register the facts about an estimated 1.5 million acres (600,000 hectares) of common land in England and Wales so that better use may be made of it, particularly for recreational purposes; and the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966, which provides for the establishment of a park extending more than 20 miles (32 kilometres) to the north of London and including a wide variety of amenities and recreational facilities for the public, under a plan drawn up by the Civic Trust (see p. 30).

¹A government advisory body on the development of amateur sport and physical recreation.

RENEWAL AND PRESERVATION

Traffic in Towns

The rapid increase in car ownership in recent years has been one of the most important social changes affecting town and country planning. In 1966 there were 9.5 million cars in Britain, compared with a total of 3.9 million in 1956. Nearly 70 per cent of all passenger—miles travelled in 1965 were in private motor vehicles—an increase of some 28 per cent over ten years. By 1980 car ownership is expected to have more than doubled its mid-1960 total. The 1966 sample census indicated that 45 per cent of households in Great Britain had a car: each household will own an estimated 1.3 cars by 2010. This situation has brought increased mobility and enjoyment to many people but has also engendered many problems, particularly in a congested country like Britain where the extent of unspoilt countryside is limited (see p. 22) and where towns were not designed to accommodate so many vehicles. The growth in motor traffic has been described¹ as the most disruptive force that has ever assailed British towns in peacetime.

About 90 per cent of the British people live in towns: half of them live and work in the seven great conurbations around London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool and Newcastle. In recent years people have moved from the inner areas of cities such as London and Glasgow to live in suburban areas on the outskirts: they commute² to work in the central areas each day either by public or private transport.

The Buchanan³ report, *Traffic in Towns*, published in 1963 was a comprehensive study of the impact of a large and rapid increase in the growth of traffic and its probable effect on British towns by the end of the century. It set out some basic principles by which the efficient movement of traffic might be reconciled with the continuance of civilised urban living conditions. On the one hand, a primary network of main roads should be developed to carry vehicles between towns and other areas of development and on which traffic needs should take precedence. On the other hand Professor Buchanan maintains that in certain commercial, industrial or residential areas traffic should be subordinate to the needs of people living and working in them. These 'environmental' areas should be kept free of heavy traffic and general congestion: only vehicles having business in the areas should be allowed to enter them. The report shows that if the accommodation of a great deal of traffic and good environmental conditions are desired in urban areas at the same time, the cost of redevelopment is likely to be extremely expensive. Each town has its individual problems and decisions to make regarding (a) the capacity of its existing road system (which in most towns is inadequate for the likely traffic demand); (b) the scale of investment which can be undertaken for its extension and improvement to ensure the efficient movement of traffic on a large scale; and (c) the value a town's inhabitants place on such amenities as relative freedom from noise, fumes and visual intrusion in historic streets and squares or the element of danger and anxiety in busy shopping centres resulting from increased traffic.

¹*Historic Towns: Preservation and Change*, HMSO, 1967, 27s. 6d.

²Commuters are people who make regular daily journeys between their homes in the suburbs and their places of work in the centre of towns.

³A study group headed by Professor C. D. Buchanan was set up by the Minister of Transport in 1960 to make an independent report on long-term problems of traffic in urban areas.

In its White Paper, *Transport Policy*,¹ the Government declares that its aim is to see that primary networks needed for the main traffic flows and for the establishment of environmental areas will be built as soon as resources are available. Local authorities have been advised by the Government to adopt the report's concepts as far as possible when they undertake programmes for the clearance of slum housing and the renewal of town centres. Liverpool's redevelopment plan, for example, provides for the construction of an inner motorway as part of a primary road network on the lines recommended by Professor Buchanan.

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government has given guidance on new designs for housing layouts² in traffic-free areas. The Minister has pointed out that with the growth in car ownership the traditional vehicle road with access at the front and pavements can no longer be regarded as safe or quiet or convenient enough. He drew attention to housing schemes embodying Radburn principles, for example (see p. 17), which consist of roads for motor vehicles only, a separate footpath system and houses specially designed and grouped with separate access for pedestrians and cars. The self-contained path system should give easy access to every house and link houses with playgrounds, shops, schools and community buildings.

The Government believes that the greater integration of land use and transport planning is of basic importance. The volume and nature of transport is governed by land use: densities and the type of development affect the nature and demand for transport. Local authorities have been urged to adopt comprehensive land use and transport policies in their development plans, for example, in urban areas, by dispersing buildings and activities such as industry, markets and stadia, all of which generate a great deal of traffic. They are also being encouraged to undertake land use/transport studies in urban areas to assess the future demand for urban transport and its distribution between the public and private sectors. As an example, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Ministry of Transport are working in partnership with Leeds City Council to identify the problems of achieving integrated policies for urban redevelopment, highway construction, public transport and parking.

Over the next few years, however, it is estimated that vehicular growth is likely to outstrip the rate at which urban road systems can be improved and extended. To make the best use of roads in congested areas local authorities are encouraged to draw up comprehensive schemes for traffic management. An estimated 68,000 cars enter central London each week-day carrying people to work, a high proportion of which are parked at the roadside, and a similar, although rather less acute, situation exists in other large cities. One-way streets, clearways and other devices have been introduced in many areas to improve the flow of traffic. Several experiments have been made, for example, in delivering goods to shops outside working hours to avoid the dislocation of traffic in town centres. An experiment is being undertaken in Glasgow to control traffic flow by automatic signals operated from a central point by computers. Street parking is often controlled by

¹Cmnd. 3057, HMSO, 1966, 3s. 6d.

²*Cars in Housing*—Design Bulletin No. 10, HMSO, 1966, 12s. 6d.

meters or other means which regulate short-term parking for shopping or business trips and which prohibit parking on busy roads. Off-street car parks are also being built. Methods of road pricing—charging directly for the use of roads according to the time spent and distance travelled on them—are being investigated. A planning bulletin has been issued giving advice on parking provision in town centres (see Reading List). A number of towns, including Leeds, Norwich and Portsmouth, have schemes which aim to free streets from domination by traffic. In Coventry, the Barbican development in the City of London and the Bull Ring at Birmingham, traffic-free precincts have been established.

The Government is encouraging the improvement and expansion of public transport services by road and rail to relieve the congestion in cities, particularly that caused by commuters. In a White Paper, *Public Transport and Traffic*, it proposes that local passenger transport authorities be formed to draw up integrated plans for public bus and rail services and to manage them in their areas. Exchequer grants would be available, for the modernisation of public transport. A joint study by the Ministry of Transport and Manchester Corporation has been made into the comparative cost and environmental considerations involved in building and operating several rapid transit systems, including a monorail system. In the cities of Newcastle and Leeds traffic lanes have been reserved experimentally for buses in an attempt to increase the speed and reliability of the public service.

Urban Renewal

The pressures of an increasing number of cars on the roads, a rapidly growing population and rising land values, combined with the availability of new construction techniques and standardised materials such as steel, concrete and glass, have encouraged considerable redevelopment and the extension of existing urban areas over the past few years. Several hundred town centre redevelopment schemes are at various stages of preparation and implementation. Loans sanctioned by the Government for this purpose in England and Wales totalled nearly £50 million in 1965–66. The Government intends to co-ordinate schemes for redevelopment to ensure that they are related to the financial resources available in the public sector for this purpose.

In order to aid and simplify the work of planning for renewal, local planning authorities have been advised to prepare non-statutory town centre maps showing in broad outline their proposals for the future development of town centres. These maps act as guides and may be available for examination and discussion. Two Royal Fine Art Commissions (one for England and Wales and one for Scotland) advise and report on questions of public amenity and artistic importance regarding new building schemes. For example, they have been consulted in recent years by many local authorities throughout the country on proposals for redevelopment and the design of civic buildings. An Urban Planning Directorate in the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport, is developing policies and techniques involved in urban renewal. A Centre for Environmental Studies, financed by the Government and the Ford Foundation, is sponsoring research into the problems of re-shaping towns and building new cities.

Historic Buildings

While encouraging urban renewal the Government is concerned to preserve areas and buildings of particular architectural, historic or scenic value. Such buildings might be notable examples of a certain style of architecture or have historic associations with specific men or events. However, they may be unsuitable for modern needs and costly to maintain. Under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 grants are available from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Scottish Development Department for repairs and maintenance to buildings of outstanding interest. By 1966 these had amounted to £6 million. Historic Buildings Councils (for England, Wales and Scotland) advise Ministers on the making of grants, on acquisition and grants for acquisition, new uses for buildings and the maintenance of lists of buildings (under the Town and Country Planning Acts). Ancient Monuments Boards fulfil a similar function for the Ministry of Public Building and Works. By mid-1967 over 100,000 buildings of special architectural or historic interest had been listed for the guidance of local planning authorities; the authorities may make building preservation orders to protect such buildings from demolition or harmful alteration. In addition, local authorities may make grants or loans for their repair and maintenance.

The Government has initiated pilot studies in four historic towns—Bath, Chester, Chichester and York—with the objects of defining which buildings and areas (such as a complex of streets or an ecclesiastical precinct) should be conserved and which are expendable, and of discovering the implications of conservation policies; the way in which the architectural and historic character of towns can best be preserved and enhanced while at the same time their economic buoyancy is maintained. A Preservation Policy Group, composed of members of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the Ministry of Transport and outside experts, is co-ordinating these studies and reviewing legislative, financial and administrative arrangements for the preservation of historic buildings and areas. In a guide, *Historic Towns: Preservation and Change* (see Reading List), the Minister of Housing and Local Government has urged planning authorities to undertake a survey of each town to pick out the different features of visual or historic interest that are worth safeguarding. In this way decisions may be made about the designation of conservation areas under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. The Act makes provision for the first time for the preservation of areas, as distinct from buildings, of architectural or historic interest.

Experiments in the juxtaposition of old and new buildings (the latter often constructed from traditional materials) have been carried out in many towns, for example, in a shopping area in Stratford-upon-Avon and among the Oxford colleges.

Green Belts

In order to restrict the further sprawl of large built-up areas, to prevent adjacent towns merging into one another and in some cases to preserve the special character of a town and the amenities of the countryside, the policy has been adopted of establishing 'green belts' around all or part of certain urban areas. Green belts are areas which, it is intended, should be left

permanently open: there is a proscription against most new development in them. However, the need for more land for housing is so great that a certain limited use of green belt areas for residential building has to be considered and a balance between amenity and housing needs maintained. The shortage of land for housing in the Sheffield and Birmingham areas, for example, led to permission being granted by the Minister for the use of green belt land. Moreover, some land designated as green belt contains little of landscape value, like the Lee Valley for example, parts of which are to be used for housing for Londoners and others for a recreational area.

Tree Preservation

Tree preservation orders, which control felling and lopping, can be made by the local planning authorities; there are some 5,000 in force. If permission is given for felling, replanting may be obligatory. Under the Civic Amenities Act 1967 local planning authorities have the duty to ensure that trees are protected or replaced on sites which are to be developed.

Increasing use is being made of the planting of semi-mature trees for landscaping purposes, particularly in new building schemes. Between 1960 and 1965, 10,000 trees were transplanted in various parts of the country. The Ministry of Transport has planted them alongside new main roads and motorways. The National Coal Board has pioneered work in utilising the new techniques of transplanting trees in its work of restoring derelict land (which includes disused spoil heaps and abandoned industrial installations).

Voluntary Amenity Societies

Voluntary organisations have been particularly active in ensuring that development takes full account of considerations of amenity.

The main functions of the National Trust, founded in 1895, are to acquire land and buildings and improve and protect them for ever from harmful development, for the benefit of the public. It owns or protects some 400,000 acres of land and nearly 200 historic buildings. In addition to numerous country houses and gardens, the trust has responsibilities which range, for example, from the village of Lacock in Wiltshire to the Farne Islands off the Northumberland coast. The trust is among the biggest land-owners in England. Two notable examples of its work for improvement are the sponsoring of the restoration of a derelict canal at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1961 and its campaign to save unspoilt stretches of the coastline, started in 1965 (see p. 24). The trust is an independent body relying for its income on voluntary contributions (including legacies) from the public; in 1967 it had 165,000 members. Sometimes it acquires property as a gift, by arrangement with the Treasury, in lieu of death duties. Some 2 million people visit properties of the National Trust each year. It operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There is a separate National Trust for Scotland (incorporated in 1935), which has 31,000 members and cares for properties covering 70,000 acres. It provides information centres for the use of visitors.

The Civic Trust was founded in 1957 to encourage high quality in architecture and planning, to preserve buildings of distinction and historic interest, to protect the beauties of the countryside and to eliminate and prevent ugliness: its aim is to stimulate public interest in these matters. The trust

is an independent body financed by covenants from leading industrial and commercial firms. There are associate trusts in the north-east and north-west regions of England and in Wales and Scotland. The trust encourages local initiative; it supports and assists more than 600 local civic and amenity societies which carry out the functions of the trust, for example, by giving help in improvement and restoration work in their districts. They also draw up schemes for the redevelopment of central areas, to aid local planning authorities. On a national scale the trust makes annual awards for well-designed modern buildings. It has published proposals for the environmental improvement of the industrial area of the Rhondda in Wales and for the development of a recreational area in the Lee Valley on the outskirts of London.¹ The Civic Amenities Act 1967 was introduced into Parliament by the President of the Civic Trust, with the support of the Government.

Other national voluntary amenity societies, wholly dependent on the support of their members, include the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland and the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales; the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society; the Ramblers' Association; the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; the Georgian Society; the Pilgrim Trust and the Historic Churches Preservation Trust.

Other Measures to Protect the Environment

Under the Town and Country Planning Acts the display of advertisements on signs or posters is controlled in the interests of amenity and public safety—their content is not relevant.

For health reasons the Clean Air Act 1956 empowers local authorities to declare 'smoke control areas', in which the issue of smoke from chimneys is an offence. River authorities are responsible for the prevention of pollution of rivers under the Water Resources Act 1963 and the Rivers (Prevention of Pollution) (Scotland) Act 1965. Local authorities have powers to take action against industrial noise which is a nuisance to the general public. Planning authorities have been advised by the Government to consider the problem of traffic noise in residential areas when drawing up their land use/transport plans (see p. 26).

Aerials and electricity lines are often sited underground rather than overhead so that the environment is not spoiled. However, the cost can be very high—for example, £400,000 a mile compared with £25,000 overhead.

Under the Town and Country Planning Acts the workings of minerals is limited in places where it would affect the amenities of the area: provision is also made for the restoration or rehabilitation of worked land. Grants of 50 per cent of the approved cost are available under the Industrial Development Act 1966 or the Local Government Act 1966 for the restoration of derelict land.

The Litter Act 1958 made it a statutory offence to leave litter on land in the open air, to which people have access without payment. Under the Civic Amenities Act 1967 local authorities are given greater powers to remove abandoned cars and other bulky rubbish.

¹Implemented in the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966. HMSO 5s. 6d.

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